# President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Issues

Following is a transcript of President Reagan's news conference last night in Washington, as recorded by The New York Times:

#### OPENING STATEMENT

OPENING ST

I have a few remarks here before taking your questions.

In delighted to see Americans give in the second of the sec

Unemployment is still too high, but there are more people working in this country today than ever before, and every month we're creating over 300,000 new flow. In the last few weeks I've been involved in a number of meetings about next year's budget. And it's clear that here in Washington all of us, both in the ongress and the branch, still have our work cut out for 100 meets.

branch, still have our work cut out for 18. The Congress will help me to restrain Government spending, we can justify the people's confidence and can make 1984 a year of strong and steady progress for America — continuing economic growth, unemployment coming down and inflation staying under control, we begin the questions, 1/g like to wish the members of the Whife House press corps a yery happy holiday season.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### Troops in Lebanon

Q. Mr. President, last week you said that if there's a complete collapse, you'll pull the troops out of Lebanon. Did you mean that if Gemayel fails to put together a broad, viable Government that you'd pull out? Or can you clarify? And I'd like to follow up.

Orcai you clarify? And I'd like to fol-low up.

A. Yes, I can clarify, Helen. Actual-ly, I was asked a hypothetical ques-tion about whether there were any other circumstances other than achieving our goal by which the Ma-riess might leave, or the whole multi-national force, and I tried—I guess I tried to give a hypothetical answer to that, and maybe a bad choice of

that, and maybe a bad choice of Nords.

I simply meant that the only thing I — and I don't foresee this — but the only thing I and I have the control of t

pose that would oe a reason us or mag-ing them out.

But I wasn't trying to send anyone a message or anything; I was just trying to say, well, yes, you can't say there isn't any other way by which they wouldn't come out on think that you've just the U.S., the peacekeeper role, in jeopardy by making a mili-ary pact at this time with the country that's invaded, annexed and occupied 'Arahlands'.

any percent at this time with the country are the state of the country are the country are the country are the country and the country are the

#### El Salvador Progress

them.

El Salvador Progress

Q. Mr. Preident, file death squad activity is continuing in El Salvador, so I was wondering, are you satisfied now with the progress the Government there is making in halting it? And if not, bow long can you continue supporting a nation where this takes were described to the supporting them just as long as we would support them against the leftist guerrilas that are trying to take over the Government. We have a mainly military dictatorships, and mainly military dictatorships, and mow for the first time, virtually, in all that country's history, we have a Government that has made it plain that they are trying to establish derment of the support of the su

hightion is to try and neip democracy trumph there, and this is why we've offeed some help with the tree of the triumph there, and this is why we've the tree of t

Q. Was the Vice President carrying direct message from you on the

a direct message from you on the death squad? A. Yes, yes. And he had his own words also about it. And I'm in com-plete agreement with those, too. Chris?

#### **Errors** in Beirut

Errors in Beirut

Q. Mr. President, the House subcommittee investigating the bombing
in Beirut has found, and I quote,
'very serious errors in judgment
were made both by officers on the
ground and up the military com
action should be taken against officers found responsible by Congress or
the Pentagon?

A. Well, Chris, there are two reports. There's a very voluminous rebrought in by the military team that's
been investigating this, as well as the
Congressional group. Both of those
have just arrived at the Defense Department, and Secretary Weinberger
is having a complete study made of
me on his findings, probably within
the next several days.

But, as I say, they are voluminous
and it's going to take a little while. So
can't comment now until is see what
the secretary also has said that,
other than things that must remain
classified for security reasons, he
also intends to make public the findlassified for security reasons, he
also intends to make public the findlags th those reports, as quickly as
position.

### Belrut Inquiry

Belrut Inquiry

Q. Let me follow up, sir. Two days after the bombing, the Marina Commandant P. X. Kelley was in Beirut and the security there. Was he being straight with the American pople, and do you still have confidence in him?

I do year much. And I think he was, on the basis of what he saw, what was there. I think the main issue then that he was addressing himself to was could anyone prepare them: selves for this unusual attack that the sam was the safety of the mean in such numbers into that building was done because that was the safest building from the standpoint of the weapons that had been the same that was the safest building from the standpoint of the weapons that had book the safest building.

So 1, no, 1 don't think he was attempting to cover up or anyone.

U.S. Security Moves

#### U.S. Security Moves

U.S. Security Moves
Q. Mr. President, there have been in the past few weeks dump trucks as the past of the threat is, and how this all makes you feel as President to have this going on around you?
A will just feel such popularity A the past of th

has been used as a potential target.

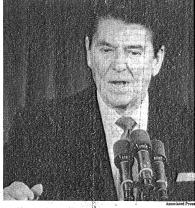
Actually, there has been a decline.

Last year there were \$1 terrorist incidents in the United States; this year so far, and the year's practically over, there ye only been \$1. And there has been no call for special measures or legislation or tactics of any kind, but I think it is simply a case of having seen what has happened, and the stepped-up violence in the Middle and the stepped with the stepped

about it.

Q. But are you concerned that by building these areas that you may yive the impression that you might be giving in to threats and terrorists?

A. Well, I don't think it's giving in to set up a barricade to keep somebody from doing this. You know there have been attempts to ram the gates of the White House during these three years that, we've been there. There have been some people that have gone over



President Reagan answering a question at his news conference last night.

the fence, so I think that these are just normal security precautions in a cilimate that has shown us that this sort of thing can happen. And as far as I'm concerned I haven't let it interfers with my sleep or my work in the office job.

#### Mission of Marines

O. Mr. President, a question and follow-up, str. it seems evident frout follow-up, str. it seems evident frout of support the U.S. Marine presence in Lebanon right now. Respectfully, str. whether the policy is right of wrong, do you believe the public will observe the policy is right of wrong, do you believe the public will occupate the public will be public will not be public will not be public will be

they will remember that they're Lebanese also, and they want a Lebanon for the Lebanese people, they will come in at his request and join the Government. And he's trying to Government. And he's trying to give them representation, and end that kind fighting there.

Now I think, as I say, that progress has been made toward that gad when you think back to where we were stroying the civilian sections of Belrut.

\*\*Pressure in Mideast\*\*

## Pressure in Mideast

Pressure in Mideast
Q. But, sit, respectfully, each week
the U.S. seems to be using greater
and greater firepower there. We had
returning bestile fire, the artillery,
the strength of the strength of the strength
guns of the New Jersey. You said last
week that you don't want escalation
or a war — can you avoid it without
Syrian cooperation? but I will not O. Ka
mission or dask or order our armed
forces to go some place where there is
danger and tell them that they have
not the right to defend themselves. So
when the shiping began and here was
no retailation, I made it plain, by way
As far as I was concerned, when an
American military man is shot at, he
can shoot back! And I think that
there's been some indication that
rather than stepped-up activity, that
the distinction of the strength of the strength
fair game.
I don't say that they won't try these

that the multinational forces were, I don't say that they won't try these terrorist' activities again; I'm sursectivities again; I'm sursectivities again; I'm sursectivities again; I'm sursectivities again; I'm sursective when we be and a sursective well are the terrorists win? Are we to say that, well, if terrorists are going to be active, well give in to them, we'll back away?

Sam.

#### Role of the Press

Sam.

Role of the Press

Q. Mr. President, on the press, Secretary Shultz said the other day that because, on the work of the press, Secretary Shultz said the other day that because, on the whole, they were on our side. And then he observed that these days it always seems that the reporters are always against us and they the trying to report things to septimize the said of the workings up. Is that your view of the working to say that I do believe, Sam, that sometimes, beginning with the Korean conflict and certainly in experiment of the working that we want to say that you would be the worken conflict and certainly in erriticism being leveled on the enemy. And sometimes I just wish that we were trying to do, to the point that it didn't seem that there was much riticism being leveled on the enemy. And sometimes I just wish that we year trying to do, to the point that it didn't seem that there was much your cortain to an our national security in a situation of that kind, what is endangering our forces and what is helping them in their mission.

Q. Well, sir, is one of the problems a contained of the work of the problems of the work of the work

#### Reselection Plans

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, It appears, Mr. President you are going to min for re-dection, Well, you said you were going to announce something on the 28th. You have completely alterated blacks by your assault on the 28th. You have completely alterated blacks by your assault on the 28th. You have completely alterated blacks by your assault on the min the past. You're I gonring the needs and wishes of Hispanics. You tup regrams that benefit the poor and you're against equal rights for comen. So do you think you'll have enough white males to win, and aren't rowmen. So do you think you'll have enough white males to win, and aren't expense early hurting the Republicant national and state conditions.

publicans' national and state candi-dates' Alfreda I, know that this has been widely heralded that all these things are true. Hey aren't true. We haven't, in our social reforms, picked on anyone. And, indeed, what we have done—when we came here it was my belief, and we operated on this basis, that it wasn't that we were feeding too many of the needy, we were taking care of too many of the non-needy. And where we have trimmed rolls,

we've trimmed them up at the upper level.

Today, any family with an income at a level of 130 percent of poverty—the poverty—the poverty—level or lower—is eligit—at level or lower—is eligit—at level

than is anyone else.

Q. Blacks are still unemployed. And discrimination plays a part in it. And you seem to be against those for eradicating discrimination.

Q. And secondly, in the telephone conversation that one of the causes was the seniority system. And I asked you said we'd have to speed up the process, but you didn't explain that process. I wish you would explain to me that process is tha?

A. What process is tha?

A. What process is tha?

A. Wall, no. I mean what I, I just, I lot stomething there.

Q. O. K. I asked you — I said to you were against the Boston and Deriot cases, and you said, well, that's would still be the last hired and the first fired. You said we'll have to syncholid the process of the process of the process of the process, and I didn't get an answer. I wish you've given an example there that is a very difficult of the process of the process

### Marine Safeguards

Q. Mr. President, you said earlier tonlight that you would not send to the property of the pro

Standard hey're at peace with each of the couldn't find more leaders and more governments that would become "Egypts," in a sense, in settling their disputes and having peace. And today the very fact that there's an indication that they are willing and prepared to not be sent to the sent they are willing and prepared to not longer are holding that position of refusing to let Israel exist.

Q. Can I just ask, to follow up? Does it give you some pause when conservative thinkers like William F. Buckley Jr. and Richard Viguerie suggest that you should be taking the marines home?

A. Well, I take my friend Bill more seriously. I read that column, too, and I'll have to have a talk with him shortly.

#### Marines' Security

Marines' Security
Q. The subcommittee report that
was mentioned earlier tonight also
control to the subcommittee report that
was mentioned earlier tonight also
of the marines will almost perfainly
lead to further casualities. It know you
don't want to discuss what the security arrangements were for the atconfident that as protected as
they can be given where they are?
A. I won't be able to answer that
again until I, too, see the reports
that is very voluminous and must go
into great detail — it's about that
thick and it has been made by milltary experts. So I just can't comment
thick and it has been made by milltary experts. So I just can't comment
Q. If I could just ask you, sir, then,
are you saying that you aren't sure at
this point whether tonight the marines are as adequately protected as
this point whey are to the extent that
those on the field and the officers that
are involved there are dong everything they can to insure that — and I think
that I in justified assuming It.

Prisoner in Surfa

#### Prisoner in Syria

Prisoner in Syria

Q. Mr. President, within days of your inauguration in 1881, you vowed that Americans would not be held hostage again. And the Syrians are holding Airmen Lieut. Robert Goodman in the Marines leave Lebanon. Do you consider Lieutenant Goodman a hostage? And what efforts are under way to secure his release?

A. Well, we have believed for a long age? And what efforts are under way to secure his release?

A. Well, we have believed for a long the control of the control

Geneva Accords.

But yes, we want that young man back. And, as I say, we're not missing anything, any possibility, in trying to bring to terms these various factions to terms these various factions of the property of the p

own borders.
Q. But sir, is Lieutenant Goodman, in your opinion; a hostage? And do you think the Syrians will use him as a bargaining chip?

a bargaining chip?

A. I doubt that very much, I really do, in the sense of bolding it up for trading something or other— so, I don't believe so. But I'm sorry that he is there and I'm glad he is alive, but we're going to make every effort ogethim back as quickly as possible.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Merry Christmas.

A. All of you had two questions?

**Christmas Wishes** Q. What are you buying your wife for Christmas? A. I won't tell. Q. What do you want for Christ-mas?

mas?
A. What?
Q. What do you want for Christ-mas?
A. What do I want for Christmas?
You know what I'm going to say? I

You know what I'm going to say? I wan know what I'm going to say? I wan know wan in a box.

Q. Well, what do you want in a box and it in a box.

Q. How do you package it? Is that your problem?

A. No, I'll tell you, I'm very happy, and I'd just like to feel that all of you have a very happy holiday and a merry Christmas, and for all the people want of the progress being made.

Q. Has it been a good year for you, sir?

A. Yes, except for a lot of phone

ietters.
Q. How could it be better next year?
A. Not making those phone calls, writing those letters, and the continuation of the recovery, and I'm sure it will continue.
Q. Do you agree with Larry Speakes on his statement on the press, Mr. President? He said that

press, Mr. President? He said that
A. I don't knów which statement
you're talking about... and all great
American De patriots and all great
American De you agree with that,
Mr. President?
Q. He agrees with everything.
A. I agreed with him when he said I
was all through
Q. I tow did he mean that?
Q. If the Marines come
home?
A. The Marines will come home as
quickly as we can possibly bring them
home—accomplishing our mission

ome — accompising our mission Q. Sir, could you say it where we could hear you?

A. There have been some sugges-tions made with regard to bringing them home — that some of my considerations might be based on the fact that it is an election year and politics are coming up. I will let you this — to decision regarding the lives and to decision regarding the lives and to decision regarding the lives and by me for a political reason.